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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Implementation of recommendations on the six mandated areas of the Forum and on the Millennium Development Goals

Information received from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations

I. **United Nations Population Fund**

II. **United Nations system in Ecuador**

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I. United Nations Population Fund

Summary

The present report provides information on the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) with indigenous peoples. The report also gives information on the status of implementation of recommendations of the Permanent Forum. For several years, UNFPA has been promoting a culturally sensitive and human-rights-based approach to its work on the reproductive rights of indigenous peoples. Initiatives and projects have been developed and are being implemented in a number of countries. UNFPA country teams have been particularly active in engaging indigenous women and other community actors in the project implementation processes and some country teams play a lead role in highlighting indigenous issues as cross-cutting issues in the United Nations country teams' work.

A. Introduction

1. For several years, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has been training its staff to use a cultural perspective in its work and has developed resource materials to facilitate and mainstream a cultural perspective in its development efforts. UNFPA acknowledges that despite the lack of income and material goods, many indigenous communities have considerable sociocultural assets. These include rituals, reciprocal relationships, traditional knowledge and skills and support systems that deliver products or services in normal times as well as in times of crisis. This is the social capital that helps tightly knit communities survive and overcome harsh circumstances. In the past, such assets have often gone unrecognized and unexplored. However, in recent years, partly in response to earlier failures, a greater interest in the sociocultural and institutional dimensions of development has emerged. More emphasis has therefore been given to community participation and people-centred approaches. Applying a cultural perspective includes acknowledging, appreciating and working with the social capital that exists in many indigenous communities. UNFPA understands that this may be especially critical in places where traditions and sociocultural assets are being eroded by the effects of globalization.

2. The approach adopted by the organization has helped to inform project designs that fit diverse national and local contexts, without losing sight of human rights that are being promoted. It encourages finding locally grown solutions to ensure that ownership and sustainability of development results in favour of indigenous and other traditional communities. People who can contribute to changing those communities are active actors. When their attitudes and beliefs are respected, stakeholders may be open to changes that contribute to the well-being of their communities and human rights of all individuals.

3. There are some aspects that are particular to indigenous groups. Providing effective health care, especially preventive care, depends on the ability of medical and social services to accommodate cultural understandings, perceptions and practices. From years of experience, UNFPA and its partners in many countries

know how to deliver effective reproductive health information and services in a wide variety of settings. Engaging indigenous peoples in the process of ending their own poverty calls for special efforts. The ways in which indigenous peoples understand the world is essential to their identity, and development policies must reflect and reinforce them. Indigenous peoples have much to contribute to development: they must become architects and agents of development policy. They need a political space in which to act, and mainstream society needs to find a way to open that space.

4. UNFPA is also committed to an inclusive concept of development for the benefit of all sections of the population. UNFPA sees its work with indigenous peoples as part of a regional and national agenda of social protection and inclusion, and simultaneously recognizes the validity of a range in understanding and approach, including those adopted by women, youth and indigenous peoples. UNFPA pledges all its efforts to help establish and enhance the capacity for autonomous decision-making in a harmonious national and international context, so that the Millennium Development Goals may be realized in the indigenous community.

B. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum addressed to the United Nations Population Fund

5. At its fifth session in May 2006, the Permanent Forum requested UNFPA to "fully incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies, programmes and reproductive health services aimed at providing indigenous women with quality health care, including emergency obstetric care, voluntary family planning and skilled attendance at birth". In that context, the Forum also emphasized that "the roles of traditional midwives should be re-evaluated and expanded so that they may assist indigenous women during their reproductive health processes and act as cultural brokers between health systems and the indigenous communities' values and world views".

6. In order to promote human rights, in particular the reproductive rights of indigenous peoples, and to contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality, UNFPA has been implementing intercultural reproductive health programmes for indigenous women in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Panama, identifying the main elements of intercultural maternal health.

7. In Bolivia, the country with the highest representation of indigenous peoples in the Americas, UNFPA provided assistance to an international workshop on traditional medicine, in close partnership with the Vice Ministry of Intercultural and Traditional Medicine. The objective was to enhance national capacities among traditional doctors and midwives in reproductive health/maternal health.

8. In line with the Permanent Forum's recommendations, UNFPA also developed an intercultural curriculum and signed an agreement with the Ministry of Health and Sports of Bolivia and five universities in the country to carrying out a five-year project aimed at enhancing skilled attendance at births in order to reduce maternal mortality among indigenous women, including youth and adolescent girls.

9. In the sphere of health education, UNFPA has contributed to a bilingual literacy education programme in Quechua and Spanish in sexual and reproductive

health, providing first and second-level literacy to over 10,000 indigenous persons, of which 76 per cent were women. This programme, which is based on cultural elements from Bolivia's indigenous cultures, leads not only to improved reproductive health but also to the further empowerment of women and improved family and community relations and conditions.

10. In Ecuador, UNFPA has contributed to the preparation of a publication that presents experiences in intercultural maternal health practices, as an effort to reduce maternal deaths. Based on these reflections, UNFPA is defining, with national government counterparts and indigenous organizations, alternative models of reproductive health interventions for indigenous women, taking into consideration their views. While providing assistance for the consolidation of the Jambi Huasi initiative in Imbabura, UNFPA supported dialogues between indigenous women and health providers in the province of Chimborazo, for the construction of intercultural reproductive health models, integrating both western and traditional medicine.

11. In the Amazon region of Ecuador, Sucumbíos and Orellana, UNFPA contributed to the training of the Quechua women in reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention. UNFPA also supported participation of indigenous women in conducting social audits to monitor the implementation of the law on free maternal services.

12. In Guatemala, UNFPA collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance to strengthen its national reproductive health programme by providing support to develop and implement a model for the reduction of maternal mortality, with a strong community component involving local traditional midwives and community committees. UNFPA is also supporting voluntary family-planning services for indigenous peoples, especially women, and a sociocultural research study for determining unmet family-planning needs. Moreover, UNFPA has promoted the inclusion of indigenous peoples' concerns and issues in the curricula of sexuality and population education programmes.

13. In Mexico, UNFPA has contributed to developing participatory intercultural models for improving indigenous peoples' reproductive health, with emphasis on the Nahuas, Tenek and Pames indigenous peoples in San Luis Potosí; the Tsotsiles, Tseltales, Choles and Mames of Chiapas; the Mixtecan and Zapotecan women of the state of Oaxaca; the Amuzgos and Mixtecan peoples in the state of Guerrero; the Nanhu and Tlapanecos in the state of Hidalgo; the Mayas in Quintana Roo and the Raramuri of Chihuahua. In partnership with the National Population Council and the National Council for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, UNFPA carried out a campaign on sexual and reproductive health and family planning using culturally adapted material.

14. In Panama, at the policy level, UNFPA and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) supported the elaboration of the national plan for reducing maternal mortality, which especially targets rural and indigenous women. Based on ten years of cumulative experience, UNFPA signed an agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to provide financial and technical support to the Ministry of Health and the Ngobe Women's Association to scale up its reproductive health interventions aimed at reducing maternal mortality and morbidities among indigenous women, through an intercultural multi-strategy

approach.[1] One component of this project is community audit mechanisms, which are implemented through capacity-building for local "social auditors".

15. At the regional level and in partnership with the Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas de las Américas, Región Sur, UNFPA implemented a regional initiative in South America which has contributed to the strengthening of indigenous women organizations in the area of reproductive health and gender equality, leading to the inclusion of these issues in their agendas and contributing to advance intercultural reproductive health programmes and services with governments at both the subregional and national levels. In line with the above-mentioned experience, UNFPA has just submitted a regional project to the Government of Spain aimed at promoting the empowerment of indigenous women organizations and networks and the development of intercultural reproductive health and gender equality public policies in eight countries of the region. If approved, as expected, this project will help systematize, consolidate and scale up national initiatives and generate new ones.

16. In the Asia-Pacific region, UNFPA has several programmes on indigenous and tribal peoples. For instance, the India country office has undertaken several initiatives to conceptualize and design interventions to address the needs and rights of indigenous and tribal peoples by providing technical assistance to the state Government of Madhya Pradesh to focus on the health needs of indigenous and tribal peoples, particularly safe motherhood and child health. In Rajasthan, UNFPA is working to address indigenous and tribal women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS using community-based approaches, including media and interpersonal communication at village level. In Maharashtra, UNFPA provides technical and financial support to ensure comprehensive reproductive health services for indigenous and tribal peoples, build the capacity of indigenous women's groups to promote prevention of sexually transmitted infection and HIV and to mobilize women's indigenous groups on reproductive health and rights, gender issues and how to demand quality services. In Gujarat, UNFPA is supporting the State Government in reaching the goal of reducing maternal mortality among indigenous and tribal women.

17. Another example of UNFPA interventions in the region is Indonesia. Under the sixth country programme (2002-2005), a community-based support system in favour of indigenous women was set up, with financial support to the community for referral of emergency obstetric care cases. During the project implementation, there were no maternal deaths recorded in the participating villages.

18. In Myanmar, UNFPA is advocating before the Government to ensure that the areas with the most needs in terms of reproductive health (which coincide with the areas where indigenous peoples live) are addressed by the country programme.

C. Recommendations of the Permanent Forum addressed to the United Nations system

19. Regarding recommendations addressed to the United Nations system, in general under one or more items, during 2006, UNFPA made contributions in the

[1] The project will continue strengthening health services at the primary health-care level, especially the Obstetric Care Unit, created by Fortuna SA, a Canadian hydroelectric enterprise.

spheres of human rights, population and development, HIV/AIDS prevention, adolescent and youth rights, gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence and humanitarian assistance.

20. In the sphere of population and development, UNFPA contributed to the Forum's recommendations both at the regional and national levels. At the regional level it provided, along with other partners, assistance to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the analysis of the situation of indigenous peoples of the Americas.[2]

21. Regarding the development of a knowledge base on indigenous issues, including the identification of intercultural elements for programming, UNFPA provided support for the establishment of a network of analysis and provision of information on indigenous peoples in Mexico, in partnership with universities and governmental institutions. As a result, studies assessing the impact of migration on indigenous women and youth and their families have been elaborated.

22. Similarly, in Ecuador, UNFPA supported the development of the System of Indicators for Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador, including results of the 2004 demographic and maternal and child health survey. The system includes information regarding lands and territories, education, inequality and poverty, health and reproductive health, housing, employment and economy, and welfare. It is expected that this system will be a key instrument for the definition of public policies in favour of indigenous peoples and the monitoring of these policies.

23. In El Salvador, UNFPA advocated for the inclusion of indigenous issues in the upcoming fifth population and fourth housing census, providing variables that will be measured through the 2007 census.

24. UNFPA Mexico collaborated in the development of a model on population, environment and sustainable development among the Lacandona indigenous peoples of Chiapas and is contributing in the design and launching of information systems for the States of Oaxaca, Guerrero, San Luis Potosí and Hidalgo, which integrate information on indigenous peoples.

25. UNFPA supported a study on reproductive beliefs and behaviours of the Mbya people in Paraguay, a study of the reproductive health of the indigenous peoples of Salamanca, Costa Rica, and a study on ethnic groups in Honduras aimed at providing information for the design of public policies and improving programmes.

26. UNFPA facilitated negotiations between the Ombudsman Office of Costa Rica and that of Panama in order to discuss human rights violations regarding Panamanian indigenous peoples' living in the frontier, advocating for the reproductive rights of indigenous women. Follow-up actions and solutions are expected to be found in 2007 between both country offices. In Guatemala, UNFPA contributed to partnership-building between the Ombudsperson for the Defense of Indigenous Women and the network of Latin American magistrates, enhancing the networks' knowledge on the specific gender problems and discriminatory practices that indigenous women face.

27. In the area of HIV/AIDS prevention, UNFPA carried out projects in Guatemala and Mexico. In Mexico, a study on the linkages between migration, HIV/AIDS and

[2] Information to be disseminated in the Commission's *Panorama Social* of 2007.

sexually transmitted infections took place among the Tsotsiles in the State of Chiapas. Some of these findings were used to train the indigenous leaders of ten states. In Guatemala, UNFPA supported the elaboration of a study on the knowledge, attitudes and practices of four indigenous communities in the sphere of sexuality and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. That study contributed to the design of relevant strategies for the National Programme on HIV/AIDS. UNFPA continued to implement a project among the Zutujiles women and youth on HIV/AIDS prevention, promoting knowledge and responsible and safe sexual practices.

28. In the area of adolescent and youth rights, UNFPA carried out projects in Ecuador, Panama and Guatemala, advocating for the inclusion of indigenous adolescents and youth in national youth policies. In the sphere of sexuality education, UNFPA Ecuador contributed to the definition and preparation of sexuality education guides for indigenous youth of the Sierra and the Amazon regions, incorporating an intercultural perspective. In Panama, UNFPA has been implementing a replicable model on health and sexuality education, empowerment and youth rights among indigenous youth, in close partnership with non-traditional non-governmental organizations and Family Care International.

29. In order to advance gender equality among indigenous peoples at the country level, UNFPA carried out several programmes in Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Guatemala. In partnership with women's organizations, UNFPA is designing a culturally focused gender approach to promote gender equality in Bolivia. In Guatemala, together with the Association for the Well-Being of the Family, UNFPA provided technical support to carry out gender-based violence prevention and protection programmes among the Cachiquel indigenous peoples of Chimaltenango. In the State of Chiapas, UNFPA Mexico also contributed to the development of a community participatory and training model with the Tsotsiles and Tseltatles peoples, in order to prevent violence among indigenous women and girls.

30. In Colombia, the work of UNFPA, along with other United Nations agencies, during 2006 was directly linked to providing a humanitarian response to internally displaced persons, of which around 80 per cent are indigenous peoples. In the case of UNFPA, in particular, special emphasis was given to working with the displaced Nasa women in order to identify their needs on sexual and reproductive health. Through a participatory consultation process, needs were assessed and the content of humanitarian kits redefined and distributed. Moreover, UNFPA Colombia designed two projects to be started in 2007 aimed at improving the sexual and reproductive health and prevention of gender-based violence among indigenous women living in displaced areas.

31. In Peru, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Education for the scaling up of the bilingual literacy project in Quechua and Spanish implemented in the Cuzco province during the period from 2002 to 2004. The Adult Education Section adopted the methodology at the national level, reaching approximately 100,000 men and women, most of them indigenous peoples. Seven thousand instructors were trained to facilitate the educational process. The Basic Education Programme for Adults adopted a new curricula that addressed sexual and reproductive health concerns and cross-cutting issues, including gender, citizenship and human rights. In 2006, 300 centres adopted the new curricula and, in 2007, an additional 300 will be part of the innovation.

32. In 2006, UNFPA provided support to the Chirapaq Centre of Indigenous Cultures in Peru for the training of 46 young leaders from Andean and Amazon regions in sexual and reproductive health. Educational materials were developed and strategies for peer-to-peer education were developed. This activity is framed as one strategic component of the Chirapaq project entitled "Young indigenous community members taking care of their own sexual and reproductive health".

33. In Mexico, the United Nations country team promoted the preparation of a report entitled "Special human development report and the Millennium Development Goals" regarding indigenous peoples with the active participation of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples and governmental institutions. Within the framework of this report, UNFPA has been supporting efforts, along with the National Population Council, to update sociodemographic indicators on indigenous peoples.

34. In Panama, UNFPA contributed to the inclusion of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum in the 2006 United Nations Development Assistance Framework exercise and, through the Gender Theme Group, promoted synergies with other United Nations agencies for advancing the rights of indigenous women in the Ngobe and Kuna Yala regions.

35. As part of the United Nations country team's initiatives, UNFPA contributed to promoting and consolidating two intercultural theme groups, one in Ecuador and the other in Bolivia. As part of the intercultural theme group of Ecuador, UNFPA facilitated the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples to Ecuador. Within the framework of the intercultural theme group, UNFPA, Human Rights Strengthening programme and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) contributed to the constitution of an Advisory Committee on Indigenous Issues at the country-team level. The proposal of that Committee is presently being assessed with the national indigenous organizations. In Bolivia, the intercultural theme group was established with the participation of eight United Nations agencies. Its establishment led to the creation of a National Council for the Dialogue of the United Nations System with Indigenous Peoples. This Council has the objective of advising the country team on strategies to promote and guarantee the exercise of the human rights of indigenous peoples with due respect to their world views.

36. UNFPA country offices in Asia and Pacific that are working with indigenous peoples have involved indigenous peoples as key stakeholders and recipients in the design of specific programmes, mostly related to reproductive health and HIV prevention, in order to ensure that they will benefit from efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals at the national and local level. The Asia and Pacific region is also working to incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies, programmes and reproductive health services aimed at providing indigenous women with quality health care, including emergency obstetric care, voluntary family planning and skilled attendance at birth.

D. Obstacles encountered by the United Nations Population Fund in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

37. Despite important advances during 2006, the obstacles encountered by UNFPA in implementing the recommendations of the Permanent Forum varied across the Latin American region. In some countries, where institutional capacity in the area of indigenous peoples is strong, obstacles were related to insufficient core funds and lack of flexibility in national programmes. In other cases, obstacles were related to the wide diversity of indigenous groups, their geographical dispersion and the subsequent difficulty in defining "common" programme strategies. In Colombia, the issue of security contributed to hampering humanitarian assistance.

38. The need for enhanced regional and national advocacy was identified in countries in which obstacles were related to insufficient government commitment and the perception that the needs and rights of indigenous peoples were already included in national public policies and laws.

39. Some countries identified initial obstacles related to the willingness of indigenous organizations and male leaders to work on gender equality and reproductive health for indigenous women. Nonetheless, in most countries, partnership with indigenous organizations, including women's organizations, was key in overcoming obstacles and advancing in the recognition of both topics for improving the lives of indigenous peoples and communities.

40. In the Asia Pacific region, in some cases, governments were reluctant to have resources dedicated to "minority" populations, while in others, more effective approaches to reaching and addressing the specific needs and rights of indigenous peoples were needed.

E. Additional information regarding recent policies, programmes, budgetary allocations or activities

41. In line with the 2006 recommendations of the Permanent Forum, the Latin America and the Caribbean Division and the Asia and Pacific Division of UNFPA have adopted the topic of indigenous issues as a priority area for their next regional programmes for 2008-2011.

42. The next Asia and Pacific Regional Programme will have a systematic approach with specific interventions to support and/or initiate work at the country level to address the needs and rights of indigenous peoples. This will be linked to the efforts to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity within the Asia and Pacific region, including in countries where the maternal mortality rates mask large internal disparities.

43. The Latin America and the Caribbean Division has requested all its country offices to consider indigenous issues in their programming processes. Likewise, in order to advance indigenous issues in the region, the Latin America and the Caribbean Division established an ad hoc working group comprising staff members from country offices and the country support teams.

44. Moreover, in 2006, UNFPA carried out extensive training in Latin America to promote culturally sensitive approaches to programming. In those training sessions,

indigenous issues were discussed along with other cultural determinants specific to the regions.

45. The UNFPA country support team in Mexico played a significant role in advancing the indigenous agenda in the region through the provision of technical assistance to country offices and programmes. It particularly promoted indigenous issues in the following meetings:

(a) Experts' meeting on indigenous issues, held in September 2006, in partnership with the Latin American Population Association, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Centro Preventivo de la Desnutricion Infantil and the Centre for Population Studies of Hidalgo, Mexico;

(b) Seventh meeting of Ibero-American magistrates on the theme "Justice and gender in diversity", which included discussions on actions needed to further indigenous and afro-descendant women's access to justice;

(c) International seminar on poverty, social exclusion and racial/ethnic discrimination in Latin America and the Caribbean, in which UNFPA presented a publication on "Sexual and reproductive health behaviours according to ethnicity in Mexico", emphasizing findings on the role of secondary education for advancing women's status, delaying early marriages and pregnancies and the need for including indigenous world views and languages in health and education public policies.

46. In the Latin American region, UNFPA has an estimated 20 projects and/or initiatives being carried out at the regional and national levels, mainly in the countries of Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama and Peru. It is worth noting that Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, Brazil and Costa Rica have included or are including the topic of indigenous issues in their new country programmes. In the Asia-Pacific region, UNFPA is carrying out initiatives in favour of indigenous peoples in India, Myanmar, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

F. Information and suggestions regarding the special theme of the sixth session: "Territories, lands and national resources"

47. Within the framework of the sixth session of the Permanent Forum on the theme of "Territories, lands and national resources", the Latin America and the Caribbean Division is organizing a preparatory meeting for April 2007 with the indigenous organizations of South America, Mexico, Guatemala and Panama that will attend the sixth session, to be held in May 2007. The purpose of the meeting is to provide a space for reflection and discussion on the agenda and previous recommendations of the Forum. In addition, the country offices of Bolivia and Ecuador are organizing two national meetings with indigenous organizations, including women's organizations, as preparatory activities for the sixth session.

II. Report of the United Nations system in Ecuador

Summary

This report refers to the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), together with the contributions made by various United Nations agencies in Ecuador in compliance with the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples in the framework of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples for the year 2006. This is the second joint report submitted to the Permanent Forum by United Nations agencies; it was prepared by the intercultural theme group chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Ecuador.

A. Cooperation framework

48. In the context of United Nations reform, Ecuador is moving towards harmonizing views, strategies and actions and streamlining procedures. The common country assessment of the United Nations system in Ecuador in 2002 highlighted the need to work to reduce inequalities and exclusion in the economic, social, ethnic and gender spheres. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) incorporates in its strategies an intercultural and gender perspective aimed at reducing these inequalities.

49. The inter-agency, intercultural theme group established by the United Nations country team is making efforts to incorporate an intercultural approach into UNDAF programming. The group is composed of United Nations focal points, who are participating in an effort to harmonize views, knowledge and experiences in their work with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and to implement an annual work programme agreed by the agencies. The following agencies are part of the working group: UNFPA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank and the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

B. Coordination of United Nations agencies in Ecuador

50. The practice of inter-agency coordination at the country level is in keeping with the United Nations reform and with the Permanent Forum's mandate to heighten awareness about indigenous issues and promoting integration and

coordination of all activities related to these issues within the United Nations system.

C. Cooperation among United Nations agencies in Ecuador

51. Inter-agency activities are aimed at the three areas of cooperation defined by UNDAF: poverty reduction through access to basic social services; environmental sustainability; and democratic governance and transparency. In these three areas, United Nations agencies are involved in various projects, some of which are being jointly implemented with the indigenous peoples and nations of Ecuador. The working strategies include: (a) focusing agency efforts on indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples; (b) raising awareness of gaps based on ethnicity, race and gender; (c) empowering indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples as partners in development strategies; and (d) creating internal mechanisms to ensure the incorporation of an intercultural perspective.

D. Report on Millennium Development Goals

52. The United Nations system made progress in preparing a report on the Millennium Development Goals, which takes into account the perspective of indigenous peoples. This report was discussed with the country's indigenous organizations. A preliminary version, which focuses on gaps based on ethnic discrimination and makes policy recommendations for bridging these gaps, has been completed.

E. Poverty reduction through access to basic social services

1. Education

53. Through the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme, jointly executed by UNDP and UNHCHR and supported by the Catalan Agency for Development Cooperation, human rights and the rights of indigenous peoples were incorporated into the curriculum of the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education (DINEIB).

2. Health

54. On the basis of an international seminar on intercultural approaches to maternal health, a proposal was put forward for culturally sensitive sexual and reproductive health services in Chimborazo province, which has a high concentration of indigenous peoples. UNFPA is working with the Provincial Indigenous Health Department on an intercultural sexual and reproductive health-care model. UNFPA worked with the Quechua people in the Amazon region on disseminating the Free Maternity and Child Care Act and on sexual and reproductive health training.

55. PAHO has prepared an intercultural guide to the treatment of childhood illness; this technical tool will be used by the Ministry of Public Health after it has been tested at the local level.

56. PAHO has relaunched its Health of the Indigenous Peoples Initiative, urging member States to ensure incorporation of indigenous perspectives into the Millennium Development Goals and national health policies; to improve information and knowledge management on indigenous health issues to strengthen regional and national evidence-based decision-making and monitoring capacities; and to integrate an intercultural approach into the national health systems of the Region as part of the primary health-care strategy.

57. The Indigenous Health Department of the Ministry of Health, together with the Disaster Preparedness Programme and the PAHO Regional Health Programme of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas, held a workshop on risk management based on local capacities of indigenous peoples, which made it possible to disseminate disaster risk management practices and tools and incorporate indigenous world views concerning disasters.

58. The Culture Sector of UNESCO executed two pilot projects on the promotion and protection of traditional medicine and cultural tourism; the UNESCO office in Quito, pursuant to the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and from various culture-management and development-oriented perspectives, carried out these projects jointly during the 2004-2005 biennium with two indigenous organizations in the Ecuadorian Sierra, an area with a high concentration of indigenous poverty.

59. The first project, on recovery of traditional medicine and prevention of diseases, executed by the Fundación Salud y Vida in Saraguro, southern Ecuador, has helped to establish a system of self-sustainable medicinal plant gardens, which are administered and maintained by the communities themselves. Dissemination of knowledge about the Andean world view concerning traditional medicine is a strong component of this project. Its impact has been theoretical and spiritual, as well as pragmatic. The second project on development of community tourism through traditional medicine, is being executed by an indigenous organization in the central mountains (Chimborazo province), where women make up 80 per cent of the population. It promotes cultural tourism based on the practice of traditional medicine, and extracts products for domestic and external consumption.

3. Sociodemographic and health information

60. The 2004 demographic and mother-and-child-health survey (ENDEMAIN 2004) for the first time obtained data disaggregated by groups of indigenous peoples. This information was compiled in a publication on indigenous peoples' health, which shows the existing discrimination gaps, in particular in maternal and child health care. These gaps result in high infant and maternal mortality rates among rural, mainly indigenous populations, and other problems related to child and maternal malnutrition and teen-age pregnancy, among other things.

61. The System of Indicators for Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador was updated this year with UNFPA support and contains information from ENDEMAIN 2004 on indigenous peoples' health status. The System includes indicators such as identity, traditional medicine, land, territories and biodiversity, social action and territorial administration. The indicators, on population, inequality and poverty, health and hygiene, education, housing, employment, unemployment, economic factors and well-being — disaggregated by ethnic group — allow for comparisons between groups and measurement of existing inequalities.

F. Environmental sustainability

62. The UNDP Small Grants Programme has supported 15 local and national sustainable projects, directly managed by indigenous organizations or non-governmental organizations working with indigenous groups. In March 2006, the Programme held a workshop, which was attended by 70 indigenous leaders, to explain how the Programme supports community initiatives aimed at strengthening the organizational capacities of indigenous organizations and their capacity to manage their natural heritage, inform them about new options for submitting project profiles to the Programme (videos, photographs, identity cards), and gather information and views as input into its strategy for working with indigenous peoples.

63. UNDP and the Andean project of UNCHCR supported the Ministry of the Environment in setting up inter-agency coordination mechanisms and identifying priorities for the formulation of a new action plan for the protection of the rights of isolated indigenous peoples. They also participated in a regional seminar on isolated and first-contact indigenous peoples in the Amazon region and the Gran Chaco, organized by UNCHCR and other organizations and held in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, in November 2006.

The potential of tourism for alleviating poverty and promoting intercultural dialogue

64. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), the United Nations body responsible for tourism, launched its Sustainable Tourism-Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme with a view to promoting sustainable tourism. The ST-EP programme in South America is based in Quito and became operational in mid-2005.

65. Community tourism is a tool for reducing poverty and protecting the environment. The indigenous communities, Afro-Ecuadorian people and farmers view tourism as more than merely a business. They try to combine tourist activities with community life, and this allows for respect for their cultures, protection and balance of the environment (*pachamama*), respect for their knowledge and ancestral practices and environmental and territorial management of their natural resources.

G. Governance and transparency

66. The aforementioned Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) programme, which was jointly implemented by the National Directorate for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples and the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education, facilitated the preparation of a training manual for indigenous defenders of human rights and a study on collective indigenous rights in Ecuador, among other things.

1. Consultative mechanism

67. With the support of the HURIST programme, the intercultural theme group is working on establishing an advisory council and adviser on indigenous peoples and the United Nations system in Ecuador, with a view to considering the human rights of indigenous peoples and incorporating the indigenous world view into relevant programmes and strategies.

2. Gender

68. Recognizing that indigenous women suffer domestic violence, UNIFEM and UNESCO worked on an awareness campaign that provided training on gender-based violence to community radio stations and supported the production of two radio programmes on the prevention of violence in bilingual (Quechua-Spanish) indigenous communities — a spot announcement and a sociodrama on the prevention of violence against women. Some of the radio stations that received this training later took part in a competition that was part of the campaign of activism to end violence against women, and one of the stations was awarded a prize.

69. In the framework of the regional project of the Intercontinental Network of Indigenous Women of the Americas, UNIFEM supported the holding of an Andean meeting that established a set of priorities aimed at promoting the political participation of indigenous women, which was submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Andean Community.

70. In Sucumbíos, in the Ecuadorian Amazon, UNIFEM and UNFPA supported the Association of Quechua Women in implementing an awareness campaign and training project on gender-based violence as one of the problems that restricts the participation of women and the exercise of their rights at the community level. UNIFEM supported the Association of Quechua Women of Sucumbíos in implementing this project in the cantons of Lago Agrio, Cascales and Putumayo. The strategy consisted of holding mixed training and awareness-raising workshops at different levels and of lobbying the authorities of the Federation of Quechua Organizations.

3. Children and youth

71. Indigenous children, youth and leaders who participated in developing a minimum agenda for protecting the rights of indigenous children and youth promoted the agenda in three of the country's regions through the system of bilingual intercultural education, and they began implementing the work proposals for contributing to the agenda at the community level.

72. In the framework of the segment on health and nutrition in the minimum agenda, an agreement on pregnancy and childbirth was reached by the Ministry of Public Health, the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the Central University of Ecuador, the Confederation of Quechua Nations of Ecuador (ECUARUNARI) and UNICEF. The aims of the agreement are to: (a) include vertical childbirth in the protocol on childbirth in the public health system, and (b) to include traditional childbirth methods in the curriculum for students of medicine.

73. In the framework of the segment on education in the minimum agenda, a proposed methodology on the promotion and implementation of the agenda throughout the system of bilingual intercultural education was prepared, tested and put in place. The new methodology will ensure that indigenous children express themselves and participate in the classroom with a view to implementing the agenda. To that end, training was provided to a group of trainers who in turn will provide training to supervisors and teachers throughout the system.

74. In addition, UNICEF, the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education and the University of Cuenca maintain a working partnership through the Regional Andean Project of Bilingual Intercultural Education for the Amazon

Region (EIBAMAZ) with a view to increasing the number of children attending bilingual schools in the Ecuadorian Amazon. This four-year project, which was funded and sponsored by the Government of Finland, has three components: initial and ongoing teacher training; research on bilingual intercultural education in the Amazon; and production of educational material for children of indigenous minorities of the Amazon.

75. EIBAMAZ is a regional project that receives support from the UNICEF offices in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador. It aims to strengthen the system of bilingual intercultural education and to improve the quality of its services in each country.

76. UNFPA supported indigenous organizations in mountainous areas in preparing sex education materials with an intercultural approach for teachers at bilingual schools, and the "Let's take care" health promotion manual was adapted for their use.

H. Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples

77. From 24 April to 4 May 2006 the Special Rapporteur, Rodolfo Stavenhagen, made an official visit in connection with the situation of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples. This visit was requested by national indigenous organizations and coordinated by the United Nations system through the intercultural theme group. The Special Rapporteur visited five of the country's provinces and met with the authorities of the central Government, including the President, Ministers, Parliament, the judiciary and representatives of State indigenous institutions, such as the Council for the Development of the Nationalities and Peoples of Ecuador (CODENPE), the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education (DINEIB), the National Directorate for Indigenous Health (DNSI), the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Directorate for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples (DINAPIN). The Special Rapporteur also met with representatives of indigenous nationalities and peoples, community leaders in several provinces and representatives from the United Nations system in Ecuador, international cooperation agencies, the business sector, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions.

78. One of the most important conclusions of the Special Rapporteur's visit was that the full realization of constitutional principles must be achieved through secondary legislation and regulation of constitutional rights. Congress was urged to enact legislation in this area, to strengthen legislative mechanisms and institutional structures and to approve a law on the reconciliation of, and distribution of competencies between, indigenous justice and ordinary law.

79. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the Human Rights Council should call on Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and the international community to pool forces and resources in order to protect and safeguard endangered indigenous peoples living in the Amazonian region and enact the necessary legislation for the promotion, protection and safeguarding of the rights of peoples in voluntary isolation, in strict compliance with the International Labour Organization Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the Human Rights Council.

80. To follow up the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ecuador participated in a seminar organized by Droit et Démocratie in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The seminar was held in Montreal, Canada, and provided a forum for discussion on the implementation of the recommendations. Ecuador described the experience of coordination within the intercultural theme group as a good practice that should promote inter-agency cooperation and follow-up of the Rapporteur's recommendations.

I. Preparation for participation in the fifth session of the Permanent Forum

81. The intercultural theme group organized a preparatory workshop for the participants in the fifth session of the Permanent Forum, attended by representatives of indigenous organizations of men and women from Ecuador, Peru, Colombia and Guatemala. This activity was coordinated and financed by a number of agencies working together.

J. Andean project for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples and people of African descent in Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru

82. Under this project, the intercultural theme group was assisted this year by an indigenous fellowship recipient from the Shuar group in the Ecuadorian Amazon, who worked for four months, from September to December, with the intercultural theme group and the Andean project. This collaboration was very useful, both to the United Nations and to the trainee, who became familiar with the functioning of the United Nations system and its agencies, programmes and projects.

K. Conclusions

83. **The work of the United Nations in Ecuador with indigenous peoples in 2006 made progress in preparing a report on the Millennium Development Goals from the perspective of indigenous peoples; in conferring with indigenous peoples in the ongoing process of setting up an advisory council, composed of representatives of national bodies; in organizing the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people; and on raising public awareness of the existing inequality gaps by publishing information, especially in the field of reproductive health. This information has been disseminated through two inter-agency brochures and associated programmes. An innovative aspect has been the incorporation of an indigenous fellowship recipient in the intercultural theme group, which contributed to his further involvement in the intercultural work of the United Nations system.**

84. **The challenges for 2007 include following up the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, disseminating the report on the Millennium Development Goals among the indigenous peoples and promoting the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into public policy.**